

OUTSIDE · A
CITY · WALL



KNIGHT

Central BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

presented by

W. A. ELLIOTT



KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

*in best
- that
- the*

"Listen, friend who may read
these words, while I tell how
there as never before I saw Jesus
Christ and him crucified."

Gift
of
William Anderson Elliott, D.D.

Fifty Years a Baptist Pastor. . .

Past President of The Northern
Baptist Convention. . .

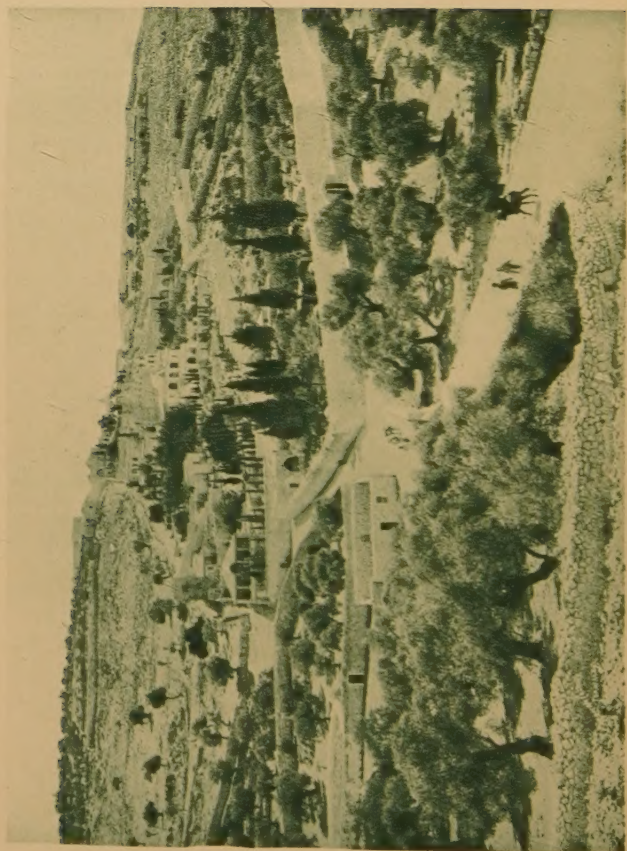
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Thanksgiving 1946

OUTSIDE A CITY WALL

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE SONG OF OUR SYRIAN GUEST
THE LOVE WATCH
SAINT ABIGAIL OF THE PINES
THE SIGNS IN THE CHRISTMAS FIRE
THE SHEPHERD OF JEBEL NUR
NO ROOM IN THE INN
OUTSIDE A CITY WALL



Outside a City Wall

BY
WILLIAM ALLEN KNIGHT

AUTHOR OF "THE SONG OF OUR
SYRIAN GUEST," ETC.



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[W · D · O]

NORWOOD · MASS · U · S · A

Foreword

Foreword

THEY who would see Jesus in viewing the Jerusalem of our time must remember to look for reminders of him outside the walls for the most part. Excepting only the Temple area, so inviolately guarded by Mohammedan zealotism that it is hazardous to be alone and give the mind over to its majesties of memory, there is little inside the city gates to aid one in forming lifelike conceptions of scenes in our Lord's history. Was not Jerusalem razed to the ground a few years after he was led to death through its now deeply buried streets? Have not catastrophic centuries and teeming aliens done enough to warn intelligent Christians from a false hunt which ends in serious revulsion?

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But recall how much of what we know about the Master's Jerusalem history is localized on the east side of the city outside the wall; then go out to the east and north and look round about. There, fixed in nature's secure keeping, you will find scenes which enable the mind to see Jesus with most impressive lifelikeness.

The service I would render all hearts attentive to what is here written is to let them share my personal experiences in contemplating Gethsemane, Calvary, and the Garden Tomb.

Gethsemane

Gethsemane

IT was the evening in Holy Week before the night of the betrayal of Jesus; and Jerusalem lay round about us. All day rain and wind ceased not. In an American home outside the north wall we had enjoyed the rare comfort in the Levant of a warm fire, while the storm drenched the deep casements and we read or mused of the city which, after lifelong desire, we were to see when "the rain was over and gone."

A shepherd, dripping in his coarse, baglike cloak, passed now and then with his sheep or goats, abandoning the hills early in such a day. Camel men trudged by, their patient beasts lifting hardy, blinking heads against the storm's pelting and gauntly striding through the mud with cavernous groans or growls.

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An hour before nightfall the rain abruptly stopped. An impulse seized me to walk out alone. There were risks in so doing, in a city never seen, whose customs, languages, and streets were strange and even perilous for an alien after dark. But the inducement was unusual; for the valley having Gethsemane in its depths, the valley between the Temple hill and Olivet on the city's east side, rises northward to a hollow which sweeps around to the house in which we were, and it was the evening before Christ's trouble of soul and triumph in that garden. I could not resist the prompting to go out alone.

IN THE GETHSEMANE VALLEY

Soon I was in the hollow. Olive trees were there, green and dripping. Ancient tombs, cut in the rocks walling this upper end of the Kidron valley, stood open and empty. Thinly plowed patches were encountered under the olive trees, and before

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long the red clay clogged my feet until it was hard to walk. A dog set up a snarl and then fierce barking on a slope above; a swarthy man thrust his head out at a lone hut's door and stared at the straggler below. But as the hollow deepened I saw that it was circling toward the city's east side. Therefore the impulse to turn back was thrown off in hope of reaching the place of Gethsemane before dark. The weirdness of a suspended storm at evening time was over all. Jerusalem was spread along the hill on my right in silent pathos. The olive trees lifted their friendly forms in quietness down in the valley ahead, and brought to mind the lines:

“Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent,
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to him;
The little gray leaves were kind to him;
The thorn-tree had a mind to him
When into the woods he came.”

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The heaviness of my steps in the rain-soaked soil even seemed a reminder of the burdened ongoing of Jesus — from the upper room in the city yonder, down into this self-same valley.

Another ravine from the north joined the one in which I was; terraces began to stretch away through the murky air in various directions; the olive trees spread their hushed presences along them; then the valley of the Kidron opened its quiet depths to view. There it all was — Mount Olivet rising along the left; the Temple hill, central in the life and literature of Israel from Abraham to Jesus, lifting its rugged old wall high in the gloom to the right; and Gethsemane was somewhere down in the valley among the olive trees!

While pausing to view this scene I chanced to observe that no one was in sight. Suddenly, and with singular awe, the thought came upon me of being alone in Gethsemane's val-

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ley. Was it possible that I was to be the only man of all the world there for those few moments in the history of redemption — the only man there when the reverent thought of millions was turning thither — the sole human heart beholding that spot on the evening before Christendom would commemorate her Lord's resort to the garden down there among the trees to face the world's holocaust of need alone with God!

I pressed on. Some distance ahead an Arab came down from Jerusalem, plodded across the valley toward the northern end of Olivet, climbed the hillside, and vanished. It was nothing to him, that valley! At length I hit upon a path which led to a carriage road running sidelong down the hill from Jerusalem. Beside an old well close to this road I discovered the traditional Gethsemane; the bridge over the Kidron and the garden inclosure lay in full view below.

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The rain began to pour down again in torrents. There was a workman's shanty up the slope toward the Temple wall. A black man opened its door, beckoned, and shouted to me in Arabic. I hid from the rain's dash and the stranger behind a high retaining wall, and passed on down the road. The desire to reach Gethsemane was now overpowering. But the rain was a deluge and it was gloaming fast.

Presently the rain slackened. I passed onto the bridge. The little bed of the Kidron, which is stone-walled there and usually waterless, was full and rushing. I stood gazing down upon its lowliness — the most hallowed brook on earth. Gethsemane was surely near that spot, somewhere against the near-rising slope of Olivet. The walls of the traditional garden are only a few yards from the bridge. They who have longed from youth up to view the Saviour's Olivet resorts will under-

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stand what solemnity, what a sense of standing amid mystic sanctities, came there.

All was hushed, strangely still, save the stream; for the rain had ceased. The realization of the presence of Jesus when he came into that valley's night-time quietude was unmarred. My soul melted in such near approach to the actuality of what occurred there. The head was bared. Lips whispered, "My Master!"

A TOUCH OF REALITY

But even at such a moment, as if to guard against the vagary of ecstasy, as if to bring to mind life in the world of men and deepen my realization of our Lord's bitter grief in that valley, there came an experience which strangely interpreted my consciousness of Jesus. In the silence I became aware of footsteps. Turning instantly, I saw close beside me the black man from the shanty —

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as black a face as one ever sees among the peoples of the earth peering into mine. He gesticulated and uttered guttural words. What he meant I knew not. With studied friendliness I touched my forehead and pointed down to the stream, laid my hand on my heart and looked up to Jerusalem and Mount Olivet. But the black man only stepped nearer with insistent tone and bearing. I would gladly have clasped his hand; but his eye showed the folly of letting him lay hold upon me. "Imshi!" said I, turning resolutely upon him and waving him off. He glowered at me, as if to test my courage. At length his big, bare feet went sloshing off through the mud while he muttered and sent back ugly words over his shoulder.

It was a relief to see him disappear in the gloom up the slope of Olivet; yet it was painful, there beside Gethsemane, to think of him as a representative of those — how many they

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are in the world's ways! — whom we know not how to receive and treat as brothers. Judas, and the stern gentleness of Jesus, took on intensified meaning for the man left alone in Gethsemane's valley.

It is needless to attempt a description of the thoughts that surged in my mind while lingering on the Kidron bridge. The sense of representing the world of men there at that particular hour in the centuries since Jesus suffered there for men and for God — the remembrance of what his majestic heart-struggle in that small valley has come to mean in the thought and life of humanity — the realization of what a heart he must have had that in such a spot he could ensphere the world in his grief, and in his peasant breast (for peasant he was to churchmen and rulers!) resolve that by his death the nations could and should be drawn to the heart of God — who can put such experience into adequate

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language? Who that thinks needs words to understand?

THE COMING OF NIGHT

In the gathering dark I thought I saw a monk pass in a porch of the church on the slope of Olivet, the church with glaring bulbous domes. I thought he paused and looked down on me over the treetops, then vanished. I passed on to the garden. The gate was locked. This was of small moment; for not the conventional, but the natural and abiding was what I sought — the valley and its memories. Thereabout, surely, the feet of Jesus trod, his knees pressed the ground, his pleading went up between the hills to God, his gentle plaint and warning to sleeping friends sounded under the trees, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" There he gave himself up to his foes because he had yielded himself sublimely to his Father. Thence he was led with

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hands bound across yon little Kidron stream, up that hillside, into thy gate, O Jerusalem!

The craving was strong to go on up the road to the top of Olivet and look over toward Bethany and muse on its exquisite glory by reason of the home that gave him comfort to the last. But thoughts of my own home turned me back; for high walls shut a man in along that rough road, and stormy darkness was settling down. The shrill, quavering, haunting cry of the Moslem night-call to prayer had floated down into the valley from the minarets high around the area where once stood the Temple of Israel's God; and its weird, long-drawn, bleating sound, like the wail of some hovering vulture, had died away in the gloom. Bethany must wait until daylight.

As I recrossed the bridge, over Olivet's top the moon broke through the rushing clouds. Its outshining seemed like a greeting, as if to say,

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“All is not alien here — I am the Passover moon that watched and lighted this valley for him.”

But in a moment it was blotted out. Through the misty gloaming I began to find my way up the road to Jerusalem. Soon that silver moon shone out again, only to be obliterated by swift clouds. All the way up the hill this emerging and vanishing repeatedly drew my gaze. It thrilled me. With memories of the company that once climbed that hill awing the mind, it seemed like some supernatural token. Its symbolic beauty and grandeur — that, at least, was actual. Jesus, the memory of thee shall ever shine out through clouds and thick darkness!

A REMINDER OF HIS SUFFERINGS

But the secret, the mystery, of his shining was not to be left unremembered that night. When I reached the level of the city walls the moon was overwhelmed — the valley was

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no longer discernible — the huge walls were only a blacker line through the dark. The rain broke once more into a descending flood.

Suddenly the barking of dogs sounded ahead. While I stood not knowing what to do, the psalm wherein are the words, "Dogs have compassed me," came to my mind. He uttered the first words of that psalm on his cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" That psalm strangely tallies with what he suffered when he came up out of this same valley.

There was nothing possible but to go forward in pitchy darkness, through a locality never seen. The noise of the rain helped to cover the sound of my steps; but before long dogs surrounded me.

One thing only is worth recording here of that moment. As I stood amid their fierceness, not knowing whither to turn, there came such a sense as I never had before of the

feelings of Jesus when he reached that hilltop surrounded by his foes.

Through a lane I came at last to a small hill just outside the city wall. Forming a judgment as to what it was, I turned to the right and entered an olive grove. The rain had ceased and all was still save the dripping from the trees. In the midst of this grove I came upon the first human beings met since the black man disappeared. There were two of them. They moved slowly. I stood still. It was a peasant leading a bent old woman, who groaned and halted for breath. I was reassured by the sight of human tenderness and passed on. Ah, there is much in the world worth suffering for! Not long after I found the friendly roof beneath which warmth and brightness and love were waiting for me.

The next day I retraced my steps and found that of a truth the hill outside the city wall which had served to guide me home was none

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other than what is known as Gordon's Calvary. In the darkness and storm I had made my way from the spot "over the brook Kidron, where was a garden," to the one place around Jerusalem which is like "the place of a skull, where they crucified him" — from Gethsemane to the Cross.

Calvary

Calvary

“**P**ERHAPS we should go inside the walls tonight. He was there, you know, until morning.”

The heart companioning mine through Holy Week at Jerusalem was right. Gone though they are, the places that knew Jesus; repulsive as are the ways of men that traffic in memories of him around alleged remains associated with his last hours — yes, we should go inside the walls, for it was the night in which he was led thither. “He was there, you know, until morning.”

Somewhere in the two hundred acres of the earth there inclosed was the house of the upper room, though the old building now shown by higgling keepers, with its stone stair leading down by its outer wall, is nothing to you; somewhere was

Pilate's Judgment Hall — indeed, its locality is fixed, for the Temple area is there still and the Tower of Antonia was at its northwest corner, the Palace not far away across the hollow to the west. In the walls surrounding this august Temple space, like surviving witnesses, are shaggy stones here and there which felt the sun's light when that morning broke and the pulsing of the air as the cry arose, "Crucify him, crucify him!"

Near the site of the Tower of Antonia, down a stair underground, the ancient Roman pavement is laid bare by excavation. One of the Sisterhood in charge, a lady speaking softly in beautiful English, showed us a checker-square on the paving stones. "Perhaps the soldiers in the Tower above used this in their gaming," said she. It seemed strange beside those marks to learn that she was from our own city in America. Near the pavement are natural-rock chambers with holes for tether ropes.

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Did the horsemen of the Antonia garrison use these? Somewhere along its length this pavement must have felt the tread of Jesus' feet as he obeyed the mandate of Pilate.

Thence run the narrow, winding lanes of today called *Via Dolorosa*. Along these footways are marked the "stations of the cross." Fictitious they must be largely. Yet the streets through which they led Jesus from judgment to execution doubtless ran thereabout; and what are a few yards to the heart!

THE NIGHT IN THE CITY

What is this little street with dim lights down its cobblestone steps? We have lost the windings of the *Via Dolorosa*. This is David Street. Its booths and shops are all shuttered and dark; but we will follow it down the steps and see what is going on in the section of Jerusalem where Jews abound. Glimmering lights are in this overhung passage to the right.

We will turn in here. What is this lighted building? The door is open. Let us enter.

A long-bearded rabbi stands on a platform at the center of the room beside a young man who is reading in Hebrew with all speed. A crowd of men and boys with their hats on are sitting on benches or standing about, each holding a small scroll and a burning taper, following the reading intently. A boy lets me hold one end of his scroll and puts a taper into my hand. Presently, with a chuckle, he runs his finger along the lines, backward as Hebrew is read, until it rests on the word "Haman." As the reader utters it a burst of derisive laughter breaks forth — groans from the old beards. Again that name is reached, and again the high monotone of the reader is drowned by the outburst, until the answering uproar fills the dingy room. They are reading the book of Esther, these Jews in their synagogue.

At length the boy beside me shows his white teeth gleefully, his black eyes flash. Something unusual is about to happen. He points along the lines once more, points insistently while the reader's voice rises breathless in its rush, points until the words are sounded, "Behold the gallows fifty cubits high" — the reader cannot be heard for the wild outcry. He pauses, looks around excitedly, then shouts with all his might, "And the king said, Hang him thereon. So they hanged Haman" — then bedlam broke — a roar of mocking joy, a surge of groans, a crash of stamping feet till the building trembled, sticks and hammers pounding benches, posts, floor, walls, while faces raised to the dancing lights howled their jubilation. A youth near me fired a pistol uplifted toward the ceiling, at which the old rabbi turned, shaking his beard and mouthing wrath, and pointed a bony finger at our group while he fumed and glared.

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Thus they kept the memory of the deliverance of their people when Haman was hanged on the gallows made for Mordecai, as their brethren were doing in all the synagogues of Jerusalem, as their fathers had kept "Mordecai's Day" at Purim from of old. But of their countryman Jesus, who was betrayed and condemned to hang on the cross, they had no thought. So the night passed inside the walls.

As we went to our abode outside the city gates I found myself wondering whether we had not seen the ancient celebration which, coming shortly before the Passover then as now, may have helped to produce the mood that voiced itself in the outcry, "Crucify him, crucify him."

A MORNING QUEST

Early the next morning, the day of the Crucifixion, a Mohammedan responded to my long rapping on a rickety door in a stone wall, and was

induced to let me enter. The wall surrounds a hillock which rises outside the north wall of the city a few hundred yards from the ancient gateway now covered by the Damascus Gate. One sees this mound well from the roads leading out from the city — an acre or two of rough ground upraised some fifty feet on natural rock, domed like a skull when viewed as one comes out from the Damascus Gate, sloping gently on all sides save that toward the city, which is an abrupt cliff marked with cave-holes singularly suggestive of the holes in the face of a skull.

On its top are scattered a number of flat, stone-covered Mohammedan graves. To the gateman it was sacred as a burying-ground of his people. To me it was more sacred than even this universal human sanctity could make it. For this spot, known to Christian scholars as Gordon's Calvary, is most like "the place of a skull, where they crucified him," of

all places to be seen around Jerusalem. Indeed, no place is at all comparable with this for matching the descriptive details of the Gospels and the findings of learned research. An impressive number of experts, ever increasing since the searchlight of scholarship found this hill sixty years ago, have reported their belief that it is Golgotha. They present an array of reasons for so believing that cannot be approached by what can be said of any other spot, not excepting that of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which has been the unrivaled resort of pilgrims for sixteen centuries. But in any case the great debate between ancient tradition and modern realism is waged over a plot of ground less than a thousand yards wide. It is enough for me that this little hill is in the immediate region where the Cross was upraised, as it surely is — quite enough that it is near the spot, in the same environment and essen-

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tially like what Golgotha was beside the road out of Jerusalem when "they led him away to crucify him." Listen, then, friend who may read these words, while I tell how, in our quest to see Jesus, there as never before I saw "Jesus Christ and him crucified."

The gateman, appeased by two francs, disappeared in his stone lodge. I climbed the little hill. No one else was in the inclosure. All sounds were remote. The top is just high enough to let one look over the city wall.

VIEW FROM CALVARY

The view that spread before me was so near, so distinct, so like seeing in sudden actuality what faith has long dreamed of among the things unseen which are eternal, that it was almost too much for me. The dimness of morning rain, the subdued light under low-hanging clouds, was over all Jerusalem. But this

only made the sight the more lifelike, veiling the ragged, hoary present and letting the mind see the city of that morning long ago. Indeed, Jerusalem is always seen best in dimness or distance — that is, in dream-light, when the heart's eyes grow big.

To the left lay the Kidron valley where olives and cypresses showed out like specters in the mist at the foot of Olivet. Gethsemane was there. Shifting my gaze to the right, just above the valley were walls, towers, domes, where of old stood the Temple and the Roman Tower of Antonia. A little further to the right, there where the Turkish barracks now stand, was the Palace of Herod. They took him thither amid that morning's tumult. There they mocked him with a purple robe and a crown of thorns. Thence at last they led him bearing his cross — led him somewhere toward this mound.

Yonder black dome, in the midst of the present city, is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, wherein millions of pilgrims have kissed spots where they believed he was crucified and buried. Let me not condemn their age-long veneration. But this hill is the true place to me. There, all is as unlike Calvary with its garden tomb as any place could be — a labyrinth of impostures, a pile of candle-lit gloom. But how lifelike all is here, on this hill outside the wall, with yonder little garden close by! It is only a third of a mile from that black dome to this green knoll, anyway. At least it is certain that this upraised area on natural rock was here in near view of the place, so near that one standing here could have seen the cross. Yonder Damascus Gate has the arching top of an ancient buried gate showing at its base. Through such a gate as that they led him out.

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BESIDE THE CROSS

With these musings the morning
hours went by. The hymn

“There is a green hill far away,
Outside a city wall,”

kept running through my mind. It
seemed to put into words more of
what the Cross meant there than any
language I know — this hymn writ-
ten by a woman for children! I tried
to sing it

“Where our dear Lord was crucified
Who died to save us all.”

Even while singing — how softly,
how brokenly! — I turned to look on
the stony ground at my feet, to
realize that the green hill of which
Christendom sings was no longer far
away from me, to think how there, in
the ground under me or somewhere
near, the Cross was set in the earth
— the Cross that now is the mightiest
benefactor earth knows.

An impulse came to look up where
his face would be on the Cross.

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Should I — I, with a man's breast, a
man's memories? To his praise let
it be written, *My eyes were lifted.*

Like a solemn *Credo* were the
whispered words,

“He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good,
He died that we might go to heaven
Saved by his precious blood.”

What words in like compass match
these for scope and simplicity in voic-
ing the faith of Christendom con-
cerning the mysteries of the Saviour's
death!

Just then strident cries, coarse
laughter and bickering sounded from
the road down by the wall. It was
like laceration to my spirit. Never
shall I forget the realization at that
moment of what the ribaldry of the
crowd about his cross must have
meant to him whose body was nailed
and hanging. What are any of our
pangs in service beside that! This
was the deepest impression of seeing
Jesus which I received in all the

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Holy Land. His "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," was in my ears. Then, as never before, I understood why the Cross is so imperative in an empowered gospel.

"Oh, dearly, dearly hath he loved!
And we must love him, too,
And trust in his redeeming blood,
And try his works to do."

As the hymn ended it was nearing noon. I hurried away to bring one who has shared many a sacred experience with me. When we returned four men were kneeling in prayer near the knoll's top, their heads bared to the rain. At the center of the summit two Arabs were digging a little grave — throwing up the opened yellow earth. My companion picked some tiny wildflowers which manage to bloom on that rough soil; I gathered a few stones thrown up by the grave-diggers.

The rain presently broke into a gust. We sought shelter beside a

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small tool house on the summit, whence the whole city was in view. There we uttered prayer together. And while we prayed bells began to sound in the Christian towers of Jerusalem—a solemn, broken chorus, answered by the slow boom of two great bell-towers on Olivet. It was noon in the ancient city—noon once more on Calvary—and, in our heart, noon on the Cross.

Clouds and darkness of a day in the twentieth century were round about hill and ancient city, deepening our realization of that dire mid-day—when his hands had been outstretched three hours, three endless hours, only three hours, those pierced hands which now have beckoned the world so long—when that three-hour darkness was beginning which well-nigh quenched the light of his sure knowledge of God. In the gloom my soul heard his cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” If he had given up

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—ah, if he had lost God in that darkness! Another cry was heard, “I thirst.” But not the plaint of helpless agony which men are wont to deem it, did that cry seem there. All hearts that suffer, hear its nobler meaning which I heard on Calvary. That was his victory-shout! He would not give up. He would revive the body to aid the spirit even by the least, would come to the end a conqueror. Moisten his lips, ye stolid soldiers of Rome, reach your vinegar sponge to his mouth as ye would do for any brave man! Never man rallied sinking body by the spirit’s might to win such a triumph!

As the day began to wear away, and in our hearts all was over on Calvary, there came a memory which sweetened all others. It was of a voice — after the tumult of many voices had ceased somewhat and only moans were sounding for the most part — of a voice tremulous but calm.

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“Woman, behold thy son.”

Then, as to one who stood near,
“Behold thy mother.”

And then, still as to one very near
but so loud that all could hear,
“Father, into thy hands!”

Mother — son — Father! So, with
thoughts of home, on earth and in
heaven, came the end.

The Garden Tomb

The Garden Tomb

THE next morning, which was the Jewish Sabbath, a murky sky hung low over the mongrel life of Jerusalem. Jewish shops were closed; but Mohammedan venders, the same as ever, sat shivering beside sliced masses of "Turkish delight" along the dark streets, called out with unctuous friendliness from stalls of garish dry goods and souvenir trumpery, pounded glumly on wares of leather, wood, metal, beside the wet little pavements. High over the cramped, dripping mass of houses Christian bells sounded now and then from cupola and tower; but their voices were broken, ending soon and mournfully. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto her."

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Our thoughts were of Jesus in his grave. All interest for us that morning centered at a spot outside the wall. It was a relief to enter its quietude.

It lies, this small garden, just below the hill of our narrative. A tomb is there, a tomb hewn out of a thick ledge at the garden's side. It has an upright entrance, a small window-like hole beside the door, and a deep groove cut along the entire base of the rock as if for a rolling stone to cover the door. Its length suggests that it was also for stones to close the doors of other tombs which were to be cut in this ledge. Indeed, surface cuttings noticeable on either side of the tomb hewn out seem to encourage this conjecture. This long trench started another fancy. Cross pieces of stone are now set along its length, and it is said that these point to its appropriation as a feeding place, perhaps by Cru-

saders when they came to rescue from alien hands yonder Church of the Holy Sepulchre within the walls. What dramatic impressiveness is in such a scene as that conjures up — men feeding their horses at this tomb, beside this hill, while striving to capture the place of their Master's cross and tomb, never dreaming that their horses were tethered at the spot where after-generations would find what they sought! Such is the drama of humanity.

Since this chamber was found and cleared of rubbish, a number of reputable scholars have come to the belief that this tomb beside the hill was the place where the body of Jesus was laid. In the French Dominican inclosure immediately adjoining it were tombs whereon striking inscriptions were found. These are to be seen in the Museum there. One of them reads, "To Nonus and Onesimus, Deacons of the Church of the Witness of the Resurrection of

Christ." Another bears in Greek these words, "Buried near his Lord." In the tomb's chamber are unmistakable marks of its religious use by Christians. For some reason this spot seems to have been distinguished in early Christian veneration. Beyond that, no man can speak as to the fact.

But this can be said with grateful confidence. This tomb answers to the details of the gospel narrative marvelously. "Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb wherein was never man yet laid." "And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed." This garden tomb is near "the place called a skull," and it is "hewn out in the rock," and it is a "new tomb," as the unfinished chisel-work plainly

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shows, and it is a rich man's tomb — no doubt of that, for it was a costly undertaking to enter the front of such a ledge and chisel out a chamber so ample, with such complete accommodations for a family as are found there. But above all, in its appeal to the heart, it is in a quiet garden. Surely for the deeper realism of the spirit, the discernment of lifelike actuality in seeing Jesus laid in the tomb, this is the spot above all others. Here as nowhere else we may respond to the call, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

Thither we went in the morning of the Jewish Sabbath, the day when Jesus lay entombed. How shall one give account of the emotions that

"Rise in the heart and gather to the eyes,"

when, mindful of a buried Lord and the world of living griefs, he stands on such a morning at the tomb of Jesus? Let a bit of real life, a touch of human pathos, simple but suffi-

cient, stand for all the world's sorrow and longing.

PETER

The keeper was a tall, grizzled, slow-speaking man. His name was Peter. Another name he had, a European name, but his Christian name was Peter. Instantly when I heard that, remembering how of old Peter came to the Saviour's tomb, the name caught my ear and started a captivating fancy. I was eager to get the story of *Peter and the garden tomb*. Some day it may be told; but only the outline can be given now. He was a Dane, this Peter. In 1855 he found his way to America and wandered in our far West. Then he came to Palestine with his young wife. For five years he was a carpenter in Bethlehem. Then they became keepers of this garden and its tomb. There, in their little house among the bushes, after many years she died.

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"I lost my wife — a while ago," the old man said on that Saturday morning of the Lord's entombment, "and I'm all alone here."

"Where is she buried?"

"Over by Zion Church — that's on Mount Zion. I'm goin' over there — to her grave — tomorrow mornin' — for Easter, you know."

At length as our acquaintance grew, into his lonely house we went, and he showed us her picture. He took it from the wall beside his cot. It was a face sweet with wifely goodness.

As I glanced into his shrunken, gray-bearded countenance, I thought how many hearts would turn to graves with the comfort of hope on the morrow — "for Easter, you know."

Jesus, how the remembrance of thee is embalmed in grieving loves the world over!

All that day and throughout the night there was rain and wind —

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rain still when Easter morning broke — rain when I started to the garden tomb. But on the way, out came the sun! Mists took flight in the brightened air. Clouds parted to disclose heaven's plenitude. The small garden, impearled by myriad drops, was sparkling in the sunshine when I entered its walls, flowers filled it with perfume, birds chirped and sang little melodies of gladness.

I followed a path leading around by the keeper's cottage to the tomb. There were fresh footprints in the wet sand. My knock and low call brought no answer. Peter had gone to the grave on Mount Zion — "for Easter, you know."

EASTER MORNING AT THE TOMB

Feeling a strangely sweet sense of privilege, of personal right there, I went on among the bushes — passed down the steps — stood in the space before the tomb. The sunlight, coming over the top of Olivet, poured

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into the wind-sheltered little hollow with joyous radiancy. How the birds twittered in trees and bushes up in the garden! And one kept singing a rapturous round, but in tones so mellow that it minded me of Easter joy which is ever softened by memories. Even the dripping in the open cistern under the natural rock at my feet was resonant and musical. The front of the rock in which the tomb is cut shone by reason of sunshine where rain had just been. All seemed touched with symbolic beauty.

With some difficulty I could peer into the tomb through the high window; but the door was shut and I had no key. I sat in a sunny niche to the west of the tomb on a slab under an arch in the ledge. Through a still half-hour memories of the first Easter morning held me in such reverie as scenes of earth may never vouchsafe again. And all the while morning sunshine was bright and warm in that nook by the tomb.

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At length my thoughts were on Mary, how she stood without at the tomb weeping, how, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb — of the voice, “Woman, why weepest thou?” and of her words, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.” Suddenly I noticed that the sunshine had faded, clouds had returned. Soon it was raining again. In complete shelter I sat still, musing on the singular accompaniment to my thoughts which nature was rendering.

THE COMING OF A STRANGER

Presently I saw a man coming slowly down the steps at the further side. He was neatly dressed, had a fair face, blue eyes, and kindly bearing. Thoughts of him who came in the garden to meet Mary thrilled me.

The stranger was evidently surprised at sight of me. But he answered my “good morning” pleas-

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antly in broken English. I arose and met him near the entrance to the tomb. Soon we began talking as Christian men would at such a spot on Easter morning. Speaking somewhat scrutinizingly, after a few moments he said, "Would you like to go inside? I can bring de key in half a moment, I tink."

Presently he returned and opened the door. I asked no questions. Together we entered the chamber. After silence, he began to speak of the impressive features there found — of the two places for bodies on either side set off by stone slabs resting on the floor, one of which was completed, the other unfinished; of a third place started in the rock between them for a smaller body; of marks in the wall as if for holding a raised slab; of the unfinished chisel-work; of the Christian symbols dimly traceable in color on the east wall.

Talking quietly, he said: "Vhen Christ vas crucified on de hill yonder,

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vhat should be done? Perhaps verkmen might haf been even den at verk in dis tomb. In any case it vas not finished. See dose half-cut places. Yoseph of Aramathea loved him as ve know; and no udder place being ready, would say, 'Lay him in my new tomb — for a few days at least.' But vhy vas dis tomb not finished afterward? Perhaps Yoseph cared not to make change after vhat occurred in dat man's place, over here. Perhaps he cared not to lay any one here after dat. And you know it vas not long after dis dat Jerusalem vas destroyed. Den dis place vas losed like all de udder holy places. By and by Queen Helena located de church of de Holy Sepulchre. But no hill dhere — only a place of stairs built up; no tomb dhere — only a place of marble built up. Here all is like vhat is told in de Gospels."

While he was talking thus, my heart burned within me. When he

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came to silence again, I said, "Shall we not have Easter morning prayer together?" His eyes met mine. He turned and pushed the door nearly shut. We knelt on the rock floor.

EASTER MORNING PRAYER

"You begin," he said. After I had uttered brief prayer, he, with his hands grasping the bars which divide the *loculi* for the dead from the ante-chamber, straightened his kneeling form and slowly prayed in these unforgotten words:

"Our beloved Jesu! Ve tank dhee dat thou vas dead for us; and dat de life vas brought fort for us by dhee. It has many times been to us as to thy furst disciples and Mary — she who vas weeping because she had losed dhee; and thou vas a dead Lord to us. Den de shadow buried us also! But thou did come to Mary and say, 'Mary!' so she knew thou vas not dead; and her joy came once

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more. Our Jesu, say the same to us as thou did to Mary; speak de name of each of us, so ve shall know dheer, living not dead. Ve come here not seeking holy places and stones; ve come to find dheer, and receive dheer into our lifes. Give us dat joy in believing which shall send us out from dis place, vherever ve may go in de world, able to make udders belief dat de Lord is risen indeed. Amen."

Tears were on my face as we arose. I took his hand. It did not occur to me to ask his name; he seemed a representative of them that believe in Jesus among the many-tongued peoples of the earth, and so I let him remain. I looked into his fair face and said, "I am glad we met here." He smiled, and with hands still clasped answered, "I vish I could speak your English better. But God vill understand our prayers, I tink."

We opened the door and came out. The sun was shining, the garden

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agleam. And from all the wondrous
Syrian sky the clouds had rolled
away.

Date Due

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Outside a city wall.

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